IN THE SPECIFICATION

At page 1, line 25, please insert the following paragraph:

--A collapsible handrail mechanism for steps or a ladder includes an outer

stringer and an inner stringer jointly pivotable about a pivot point, a stanchion

located between the outer and inner stringers and pivotally mounted to at least one

of the stringers, a latching mechanism through which the stanchion passes and to

which at least one of the stringers is pivotally mounted at the said pivot point. The

latching mechanism has a slide plate that prevents substantial downwards

movement of the stanchion, a top plate that prevents substantial upwards

movement of the stanchion, and a side plate that prevents substantial sideways

movement of the stanchion. In operation of the handrail mechanism from a stowed

position, when the stringers are lowered the stanchion is thereby forced to slide on

the slide plate causes the stanchion to pivot about its mounting up into an

operational position.--

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